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ABSTRACT

Because a high percentage of Advanced Placement English Language and Composition (APELC) students from a small rural high school were receiving below-average grades on the Advanced Placement Examination, a 10-week composition program was designed and implemented. The composition program included three main strategies: (1) the use of the rubric as an instructional device; (2) the use of forensic invention as an instructional strategy to teach writing in the argumentative mode of rhetorical discourse; and (3) four weekend sessions of test simulation. Pre- and post-tests were graded holistically by a qualified reader using a scoring rubric. Results showed the program to be successful: the pretest passing rate of 38% (5 of 13 students) was raised in the posttest to 67% (10 of 15 students), which closely approximates the national norm of a 60% passing rate. Elements of the program will be expanded to include department implementation and cross-curricular application. (Fourteen references are attached. Four appendixes contain 1985 and 1986 APELC reports for the target high school, as well as one question in the argumentative mode from each of the 1985 and 1986 APELC examinations.) (Author/SR)

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INCREASING ESSAY SCORES OF ADVANCED PLACEMENT STUDENTS BY USE OF THE RUBRIC AND FORENSIC INVENTION

by
James M. Ford

A Practicum Report
submitted to the Faculty of the Center for the
Advancement of Education of Nova University in partial
fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Science

The abstract of this report may be placed in the School
Practices Information Files for reference

June 1987

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Increasing Essay Scores of Advanced Placement Students by Use of the Rubric and Forensic Invention

Ford, James M., 1987: Practicum Report, Nova University, Center for the Advancement of Education. Descriptors: Advanced Placement/Advanced Placement Programs/Academically Gifted/Writing Instruction/ Writing Research/Writing Skills/Writing Evaluation/ Essay Tests/Holistic Evaluation/Rhetoric/Evaluation Methods/Test Construction/Testing Problems

The high percentage of Advanced Placement English Language and Composition students receiving below average grades on the Advanced Placement Examination was addressed by the implementation of a composition program including the use of the rubric as an instructional device, the use of forensic invention as an instructional strategy teaching writing in the argumentative mode of rhetorical discourse, and the use of intensive weekend sessions of test simulation. Results were measured by a pre-test post-test essay examination graded holistically by a qualified reader using a scoring rubric. Students were expected to improve to a standard equaling that of the national sample. It is expected that elements of the program will be expanded to include department implementation and cross-curricular application.

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CHAPTER 1

Purpose

The setting for this practicum proposal is the most rural of the high schools in the county, an established institution, the oldest and smallest of the three area high schools. The other schools were built in response to an increase in the area's population, and both have contributed to a decline in the reputation of the target school by the twin expedients of siphoning away skilled faculty to the newer schools and by appropriating skilled students, both in athletics and academics. This practicum practitioner has taught the Advanced Placement English Literature and Composition course at the target institution for ten years. The Advanced Placement English Language and Composition course, in contrast, was implemented first at this institution in 1984 with five eleventh-grade students, also under the instruction of this practitioner. The program has grown steadily in three years from its modest beginnings to its respectable

current enrollment of sixteen. Advanced Placement English Language and Composition (APELC) students have historically had stanines ranging from six to nine, as measured by the Stanford Achievement Test, with motivation and stanines being the major determinants in the selection of the class. The current class has uniformly high verbal ability, with eight and nine being the modal stanines.

Although there have been representatives of other races and ethnic backgrounds, the great majority of APELC students are white. The present class contains only two non-Anglo students, and both of them have so fully assimilated the English language and culture that there should probably be no distinction made on the basis of native language or country of origin. The nature of the class, the college-level work performed in the class, and the high motivation required of and evinced by the APELC students are the major factors which maximize the unity of the class and minimize individual differences. Gender is a consideration in assessing the performance of APELC classes. Reflecting both the demands of athletic competition, particularly in the fall sports, and the cultural bias of a

conservative rural population base, the APELC classes have contained a high female-male ratio. There have, of course, been exceptions, but the typical student is a white female, intelligent and personable, with parental support and high expectations of success.

These students are less exposed to the metropolitan problems and characteristically do not display the affectation of jadedness and the veneer of sophistication so prevalent elsewhere. The students are encouraged to see themselves as special, talented individuals within the class setting. They expect and desire to be challenged. They are mindful of the importance of the subject. These factors also promote a strong sense of pride and unity in the class.

The responsibility of the practitioner is to teach a college-level rhetoric and composition course, including a survey of American literature, and to prepare the students to achieve a passing score of three, four, or five on the Advanced Placement English Language and Composition Examination. Adding to the difficulty of success on the test is the fact that they are in competition with twelfth-grade students nationwide, and they know that more than personal pride is to

gained. A passing grade on the examination can be the basis for credit or advanced placement in college courses. In one recent case, a student was awarded credit valued at $10,000.

The Advanced Placement English Language and Composition Examination, on which the student must perform well to be awarded such credit or placement, consists of two parts. Section I consists of fifty-five to sixty-five multiple-choice questions, approximately one-third of which test construction shifts and two-thirds of which test rhetorical analysis. Section II is the Free-Response essay segment, consisting of three essay questions which measure facility in writing in various rhetorical modes, and which determine approximately two-thirds of the total score.

An analysis of the Advanced Placement Program reports of the 1985 and 1986 Advanced Placement English Language and Composition Examination results (Appendix A: , Appendix B:) was the basis for the problem statement. Four of thirteen students in the 1985 administration and five of twelve students in the 1986 administration scored in the upper three-fifths of the

national sample. To coincide with the national sample, eight students in 1985 and seven students in 1986 should have scored in the upper three-fifths of those samples. There was an average discrepancy between the actual success rates (thirty-one percent and forty-two percent) and the ideal success rate (sixty percent) of twenty-three percent.

Acceptable though unremarkable performance levels in the first two essays were recorded in the two administrations. It has been the third essay which has posed the greatest problem. Four of thirteen students in 1985 and five of twelve students in 1986 scored in the upper three-fifths of the national sample on these essay questions. The similarity between the actual results and the ideal results was remarkable. The discrepancy between the actual results and the ideal results was exactly the same as the overall discrepancy.

It remained then to analyze the questions to find whether the third questions were similar. Significantly, the students were offered more options in this question than in the previous questions in each examination (Appendix C: , Appendix D:). In 1985,

students were required to determine the conclusions of a given passage and the implication inherent in the conclusions. They then wrote an essay taking and defending a position on one of the issues. The argumentative mode was required in their response. In 1986, students had to evaluate the truth of a two-sentence statement. The students were instructed to compose a "well-written essay" presenting a convincing argument. The students were least successful writing in the argumentative mode in the two administrations. Although the practitioner inferred that the current APELC students would experience the same difficulty, it seemed advisable to give a pre-test essay under conditions similar to the actual examination. It was found that the students did experience the same difficulty. Thirty-seven percent of the class passed the test with scores of three, four, or five. The ideal results would have been a passing rate of sixty percent.

There were several factors which could have contributed to the problem documented above. The most obvious factor was the length of the test and the fact that most of the students wrote the most difficult

essay last. In many cases, according to informal interviews with the students following the test, there had definitely been a fatigue factor. These students were under pressure to produce for their self-esteem, for their families, and for the reputation of the class. The pressure produced tension, and tension produced fatigue. There was the possibility that students in the target population had not received sufficient instruction in the argumentative mode. Upon analysis of the course syllabus and review of the assignments made during the course, this practitioner found that the argumentative mode had been taught to approximately the same degree as the other modes of discourse. The strong possibility was, then, that this mode required more attention than the other modes. The nature of the question was also a possible factor. Several students had experienced relief at the open-ended quality of the question, imagining that a subjective response was required. These students ignored the subtle rigidity of the demand for a well-reasoned line of argument. After having worked on structured questions involving intensive textual analysis, the students had been too relieved to be

disciplined in their reasoning.

The question of disciplined writing seemed to be at the heart of the problem. Most of the students reported after the test that they had not been sure that they had answered the question. Especially in 1986, they revealed an uncertainty as to exactly what had been required of them in response to the question. In examining their test booklets after the test and comparing the booklets to the scores reported, it was found that there seemed to be a high correlation between their underlining the instructions and making notes in their booklets, and their success on the test. It followed that if the students had been aware of the demands of the question in terms of the rhetorical mode tested, they would have experienced greater success. Ways were then sought to increase student awareness of the demands of the rhetorical modes, and an attempt was made to find more effective methods of teaching the argumentative mode of discourse.

To demonstrate this increased ability, over a period of ten weeks, the students in Advanced Placement English Language and Composition class should increase their writing abilities from a passing rate of thirty-

seven percent to a passing rate of sixty percent as measured by essays administered in pre-test/post-test format and graded by a qualified reader using a rubric, or scoring guide. Other desirable terminal performance objectives included evidence of greater reasoning and argumentative techniques, a better understanding of the use of the rubric, and an increased awareness in other subjects of the demands of essay questions. Students should become more involved with the APELC class and have an enjoyable experience. They should also become capable of sustained essay writing.

CHAPTER 2

Research and Solution Strategy

After review of the literature suggested by the computer search, it was found that relatively little research had been conducted at the secondary school level into the teaching of the argumentative mode of discourse or into the use of the rubric as a teaching device. The available literature came primarily from research on the college level. Since the APELC courses provide college-level instruction, however, such research should be relevant and the techniques applicable with appropriate modification.

In dealing with the rubric as a teaching device, a sound rhetorical basis was established by research. Confidence was one of the desired outcomes of the program, and Kubistant (1981) noted that, in his college classroom, confidence evolved from familiarity with the test-taking situation and experience in taking the tests. In considering the length of the proposed program, there was evidence from a study made in

secondary schools that greater average achievement gains were made from longer periods of coaching and instruction in general test-taking skills and reasoning strategies (Samson 1985). Programs of five weeks or longer produced larger increases in scores. In another study of the effects of practice on test scores, Kubik (1984) reported that ". . . size of the effect of programs teaching test-taking techniques was related to number of practice tests taken." The conclusions reached were that the length of the program and the number of practice tests taken were significantly related to the average increase in test scores.

The most appropriate general nature of the instructional programs was also suggested by Kubik (1984). He found that the effects of the program were greater when the practice tests were identical to the actual test than when the practice tests were parallel but not identical. In the same report, Kubik (1984) also found that high-ability students experienced greater test score increases than did lower-ability students. In terms of the process of the instructional program, Gordon (1985) reported success in using her technique to increase student performance by helping

students learn more knowledgeably to read the test. Although her study was based on multiple-choice examinations, the same concerns may be applied to reading the essay questions. Her procedure was to have the students first read the questions to identify the terms they did not know. She then defined the terms and immediately showed the students examples of questions using those terms. Brossell (1985) considered the effect of the degree of rhetorical specification on the quality of the essays. Although it was not the main thrust of the research, it was noted by Brossell that the higher quality essays were uniformly limited and focused on the topic addressed. It was also noted that longer essays received higher grades.

In the only reported case of actually using the rubric as a teaching instrument, White (1982) reported that he used holistic scoring in the college classroom and that he often asked the class to develop the rubric. He remarked, "Classes do a good job in defining what is important in a paper." White concluded that holistic grading had a ". . . positive value on student writing." He noted particular success

in improving ". . . fluency, organization, development, and details." On the efficacy of using practice tests, Kubik (1984) concluded that programs intended to improve test scores should be made ". . . an important instrumental effort."

In research on the teaching of the argumentative mode, Reed, Burton, and Kelly (1985) stated that holistic assessment could be valid and reliable if readers conformed to criteria of judgment, but they warned that the question should be focused on the aim of the discourse to be produced. Ruth and Murphy (1984) also saw some difficulty in grading college essays holistically, cautioning that some writers attempted more than others and that there was no provision for these ambitious essays in assigning scores. Charney (1984) found in a study of engagement in three levels of high-school writers on essays involving three modes of discourse that Honors writers were ". . . most engaged. . . " when writing persuasive essays. Despite this engagement, there was little doubt that "Argumentation is . . . the most difficult of the modes of discourse." (Fahnestock and Secor, 1983). The authors taught a college course in

argumentation, and they identified three approaches to teaching the argumentative mode. Of the methods they described, the most applicable for the secondary level was the "content/problem solving" method. Although Fahnestock and Secor stated ". . . content tends to crowd out the writing instruction. . ." it should be noted that APELC students have content requirements in literature as well as writing requirements. Of the other two approaches, one used the language of formal logic, and the other used the language of Aristotelian causality.

Hairston (1984) stated that one of the problems she found in her college classes of advanced writers was that of the sense of audience. Mangum and Mangum (1983) provided a way to ensure the sense of audience in their report of the use of forensic rhetoric and invention in college classes. Briefly stated, the authors used a fictitious legal case, laws and legal principles, and an outline to direct their students in the role-playing of attorneys presenting their briefs to the court, which defined the audience. Identifying further problems she observed in her advanced writers, Hairston (1984) listed essays which were

". . . unrealistically ambitious. . . " and ". . . long on generalities, short on specifics. . . " To address this problem, again on the college level, Carella (1984) provided an outline which produced cogent focused critical papers on his topics in philosophy. With some modification, Carella's outline could be used with advanced secondary writers by using literature-based rather than philosophical topics. D'Angelo (1983) suggested that description and narration should be distinguished as modes rather than forms of discourse and that description and narration could be profitably included in the argumentative form of discourse.

As a result of inquiries among professional colleagues, it has been concluded that although some of them had conducted one or at most two practice sessions beyond school hours, no such extensive use had been made as seemed to have been called for. Although most APELC teachers included a mention of the rubric, only one had students score papers holistically according to a rubric, and none had used the rubric as a teaching device. Although all instructors stated that they had taught argumentation as a mode of discourse and used a

textbook as a basis of their instruction, not one had moved beyond the textbook to include forensic invention. These traditional approaches to teaching argumentation have been used by this practitioner but have not produced satisfactory results.

From reviewing the literature and interviewing resource personnel, it has been concluded that ten weeks should be an appropriate length for the program, that the practice essay should be appropriate and effective for high-ability students, and that the teaching of the rubric as an instructional device should be beneficial on the secondary level, considering its efficacy on the college level. Theoretically, a rubric component should be effective because students' work should improve as they are motivated, because students' work should improve as they find the work enjoyable, and because a rigid structuring of their thoughts should encourage focused, cogent, and rational argumentation. Practically, the requirement of intensive essay efforts after school will involve the parents, will give the students an investment in the program, will give the students practice in extended essay writing, and will give the

students practice in timing the composition process through various modes of discourse.

The solution strategy will then consist of three components. A rubric component will demonstrate use of the rubric, will give the students practice in using the rubric, and will have students write rubrics for questions requiring each of the modes of discourse. The argumentative component will begin with forensic rhetoric and invention, continue with the outline used for philosophical issues, and end with student responses to previous test questions calling for the argumentative mode. The third component will consist of four Saturday sessions of two hours each during which students will answer four essay questions. Each of these components emanated from and was justified by the research cited, and each was chosen because it could alleviate one of the possible causes of the problem.

CHAPTER 3

Method

Pre-Test

To ascertain the extent to which the current class experienced the difficulties of previous classes, documented above, a pre-test was given. Students were given an extended definition of the Spanish word querencia, and asked to explain their feelings for the place and its meaning for them. It appeared that this would be an easy question requiring no more than a descriptive essay. Construction of a rubric, however, revealed that in addition to the description, students were required to explain and justify how the feelings evoked actually defined the meaning of the place to them. The majority of the essays written did in fact neglect the argumentation, which resulted in a passing rate of thirty-eight percent. This practitioner considered these results ample evidence that the problem did exist in approximately the same proportion as in previous classes.

Implementation: The Rubric Component

Students were introduced to the concept of the rubric in the 1982 Advanced Placement English Examination question concerning Governor Adlai Stevenson's famous "Cat Bill" veto. The students were then instructed to compose a scoring guide, or rubric, which they then evaluated and refined first in pairs, then in small groups of four to six. When they were satisfied with the results, the students were shown a copy of the actual rubric, available from Educational Testing Service, of Princeton, New Jersey. Their rubrics were essentially the same as the official rubric, and thereby encouraged, they proceeded to write the essay. The essay was graded and returned the next day, and the students corrected the essays as indicated.

This procedure was repeated on the subsequent Tuesdays and Wednesdays for the duration of the practicum project, with the exception of the week of spring vacation and the week of the Advanced Placement English Language and Composition Examination, the seventh week of the project. The students accepted the routine and with the exception of the week

following the examination, achieved passing rates ranging from fifty percent to one hundred percent.

The questions were not arranged in order of difficulty because there was no way to know the difficulty until the essay responses had been written and graded. The questions were not given in chronological order, because there was no apparent advantage to such an arrangement. Additionally, the complete tests administered in 1984, 1985, and 1986, with suitable supplemental questions, were to be given as test questions in the Saturday sessions. There were no difficulties with resources, people, time, space, or equipment. The only variable factor involved attendance, as absence on either Tuesday or Wednesday disqualified the absent student from joining in the activities as scheduled. This problem, however, was minor, as the attendance of students at this advanced level was generally very consistent.

Implementation: The Argumentation Component

The argumentation component of the solution strategy took place on each Thursday of the implementation period. The forensic invention section

of the solution strategy was scheduled to take four weeks, but a supplemental week was required. On the first class period of this section, the initial presentation was made. The fictitious legal case was introduced, and the rules were established. There were enough extenuating circumstances to make successful prosecution or defense a challenge. Each student was assigned to represent the prosecution or defense by means of random selection. Fortunately, the chances evened out and each student had a counterpart representing the opposing side, again chosen randomly. Extracurricular reading and research into legal precedents were recommended.

The second session was used to help the students discover the issues in preparation for the formal typed briefs. Appropriate behavior and image were discussed, and this practitioner served as facilitator in small-group meetings of defense attorneys and prosecuting attorneys, in which strategy and tactics were discussed. Each side seemed to think at this point that the other side had an advantage, but it quickly became apparent that the legal aspects of the case, the discovery of issues and the research into precedents,

would result in stalemates in most of the presentations, excluding egregious errors. The burden, then, fell precisely where it should have, on forensic invention, the selection and order of presentation of specific details, and the emotional appeal to the tribunal judging the cases.

The third session consisted of checking the rough drafts of the briefs, individual conferences, and decisions about the length and format of the oral presentations. After the class had decided that each side would have no more than five minutes to present its case, and no more than three minutes for rebuttal, it was noticed that the total time for seven cases would be a minimum of one hundred and twelve minutes. The class chosen to hear the case was also an Advanced Placement class, and it became imperative to devise a strategy involving them for no more than two days, and for only one day if possible, inasmuch as they too were preparing for an examination. The solution arrived at was to have four of the trials videotaped in the classroom of the target population while three of the trials were being presented before the tribunal. One student had been absent due to a prolonged illness,

and the remaining student volunteered to direct the videotaping.

The fourth session included the videotaping, the classroom presentations, and the submission of the formal briefs. These briefs were paired appropriately and presented to a faculty member who had been an attorney before he began his teaching career. He awarded his verdicts the following day. The verdicts of the cases presented before the class were decided by a tribunal of three faculty members who generously gave their planning period to help the students and this practitioner. The videotaping proceeded smoothly and was viewed and judged by this practitioner. Although the total of the verdicts was five to two in favor of the prosecution, that figure is deceptive because two of the defense attorneys had failed to move for dismissal on grounds that the prosecution had not made a prima facie case. Both motions would have been granted.

The fifth session consisted of a critique and a concluding discussion of argumentative techniques and forensic invention. The briefs were returned with the decisions. This segment of the solution strategy

captured the students' imaginations to the extent that they dressed for the occasion, carried briefcases and legal folders, and comported themselves in a dignified and authoritative manner.

The students were given an essay question requiring the argumentative mode in the sixth session and were required to include rigid reasoning in their essay responses. The seventh session was the day following the Advanced Placement Examination, and this practitioner therefore deemed it advisable to discuss the examination with the students and to devise rubrics for the essay questions given on the examination, rather than to require the students to write another essay. The question requiring the argumentative mode had been the first question on the test rather than the third question as it had been in the previous two years. In the remaining sessions the students were required to write argumentative essay responses to questions based on The Sound and the The Fury, by William Faulkner, Catch-22, by Joseph Heller, and Atlas Shrugged, by Ayn Rand.

Implementation: Saturday Sessions

The Saturday sessions were designed as a series of four two-hour essay examinations to be taken voluntarily by APELC students on the four Saturdays immediately preceding the APELC Examination. The objectives of this component of the program were to increase class unity through the shared experience, to increase the students' ability to write for extended periods of time, to increase parent involvement through their knowledge of and consent to these sessions, and to increase the students' awareness of the nature and scope of the APELC Examination. Four essay questions were to be answered in two hours. The thirty-minute response time for each question was slightly less than the projected response times on the APELC Examination, an attempt to give the students practice in timing their essays and in maintaining their concentration.

As conceived, this section of the project was theoretically and philosophically justifiable. A mid-course correction was necessitated, however, by the exigencies of circumstance and timing. The first of the Saturday sessions was scheduled for the Saturday four weekends before the examination. Both that day

and the preceding Saturday, however, abutted on the spring vacation, and since less than one-third of the class would have been able to attend the sessions, the first session was canceled.

The second Saturday session also had to be modified. Despite assurances of cooperation sought and received from the Activities Director and the Head Custodian, the students and this practitioner arrived to find the school gate padlocked. Within thirty minutes, the difficulties had been resolved, but the length of the test had to be adjusted, since some students had arranged for their parents to provide transportation and other students had commitments or part-time jobs. The test therefore consisted of three essay questions, with thirty minutes recommended for each essay. The results were revealing in that each student could ascertain strength or weakness in each of the modes tested. The third Saturday session coincided with the Scholastic Aptitude Test administration and was canceled. The fourth Saturday session proceeded without impediment or interruption.

CHAPTER 4

Results

On the pre-test essay, five of thirteen APELC students, or thirty-eight percent, wrote essays awarded a passing score of three, four, or five by a qualified reader using a rubric, or scoring guide, to grade the papers holistically. The ideal passing rate would have been sixty percent, according to the national sample. On the post-test essay, graded holistically by the same qualified reader, the APELC students achieved a passing rate of sixty-seven percent, or ten passing grades from a sample of fifteen students. Therefore, it seemed conclusive that the desired result did eventuate, as the APELC students improved their passing rate by twenty-nine percent. Since this APELC class had approximated in the pre-test the average passing rate of the 1985 and 1986 passing rates, there was evidence of a satisfactory increase in their ability to write essays, including those which required the argumentative mode, presumably by using their knowledge

of the rubric.

In a tripartite program, it seemed appropriate to evaluate the degree to which the objectives, stated and implicit, were attained. There could be no doubt that the APELC students did master the use of the rubric to write more cogent and focused essays. The students averaged a passing rate on all essays combined of seventy-eight percent. In addition to supporting the previous conclusion, it was indicated by the passing rate that the students were moving quickly into the appropriate rhetorical mode. On a more subjective level, the students did seem to become more unified in purpose. This practitioner noticed a spirit of camaraderie on many occasions, and it was transferred to other classes as well, as evidenced by remarks made to this practitioner by members of the faculty on the quality of cooperation and closeness of the APELC students.

In the argumentative mode, the students were expected to learn argumentative techniques, to apply formal reasoning, and to apply the argumentative mode to literature-based questions. The passing rate of seventy-two percent on the argumentative essays seemed

conclusive proof of the accomplishment of these objectives. The questions based on literature had a slightly higher passing rate than non-literature-based questions, perhaps due to the involvement of the students with the literature. The Mondays and Fridays were eagerly anticipated, and many exceptionally perceptive discussions ensued. After an assignment made to determine the number of essay questions in the argumentative mode in other subjects showed that in a two-week period there were none, this practitioner discontinued the assignment due to the possibility of negative reactions to the other classes.

In the Saturday sessions, there seemed to be an accomplishment of most of the objectives. These objectives included the heightened sense of unity discussed above, greater ability in sustained essay writing, greater success in timing essays to avoid using more than a sufficient amount of time for each, increased parental involvement, and a greater knowledge of the nature and scope of the Advanced Placement Examination.

None of the students complained of not having enough time to write the essays on the examination, a

common complaint on previous administrations. It was concluded that the students had been able to time the essays, devoting enough time to each. Although there was no significant increase in parental involvement noted by this practitioner, it was noted that one student not currently enrolled in the APELC course chose to take the Advanced Placement English Literature and Composition course next year, a decision made after a discussion with the parents in which this program was mentioned in laudatory terms. That the APELC students understood the nature and scope of the examination was indicated by the fact that none of the students expressed surprise or dismay at any of the questions. Several students commented that there had been nothing new on the test, and one student noted that the test was ". . . easier than the practice tests...." It seemed evident, then, that the great majority of the outcome objectives had been satisfied due to the tripartite nature of the program.

CHAPTER 5

Recommendations

This program has potential application not only in advanced English courses, but also school-wide and county-wide. This practitioner will begin immediately to plan a program for the Advanced Placement English Literature and Composition course to parallel this Advanced Placement English Language and Composition program with the goal of achieving even greater improvement in essay test scores. The current tenth-grade class at the target school has been used as a norming sample on state and national tests, and the introduction and explanation of a grading rubric should alleviate the complaint of the supervising administrator that many of the students ". . . just don't answer the question." The concept of the rubric can and should be used extensively as a teaching device, beginning in the ninth grade and continuing throughout the English curriculum. This practitioner plans to conduct a workshop for the English Department

with the results of this practicum as evidence of efficacy. In addition, Advanced Placement teachers would welcome a county-wide workshop with the potential to increase test scores. If the response is favorable, the workshop could be expanded to state and national forums.

In wider curricular application, the Social Studies Department Chair has agreed to suggest to his teachers that they award credit for a credible rubric included with test answers. He also sees the rubric as potentially increasing the clarity of teacher-made tests and he has stated that he will require a rubric from the department on major essay tests. On a different academic level, there seems to be a need for this type of instruction in regular classes as well. The modes of discourse have traditionally been included in the English curriculum, but although English teachers expect students to answer the essay question, few of the teachers demonstrate how to decide exactly what the question requires. Although the results of the Advanced Placement English Language and Composition Examinations will not be known until July 1987, this practicum has already impacted significantly on the

target institution and has the potential to improve student performance department-wide and across the curriculum.

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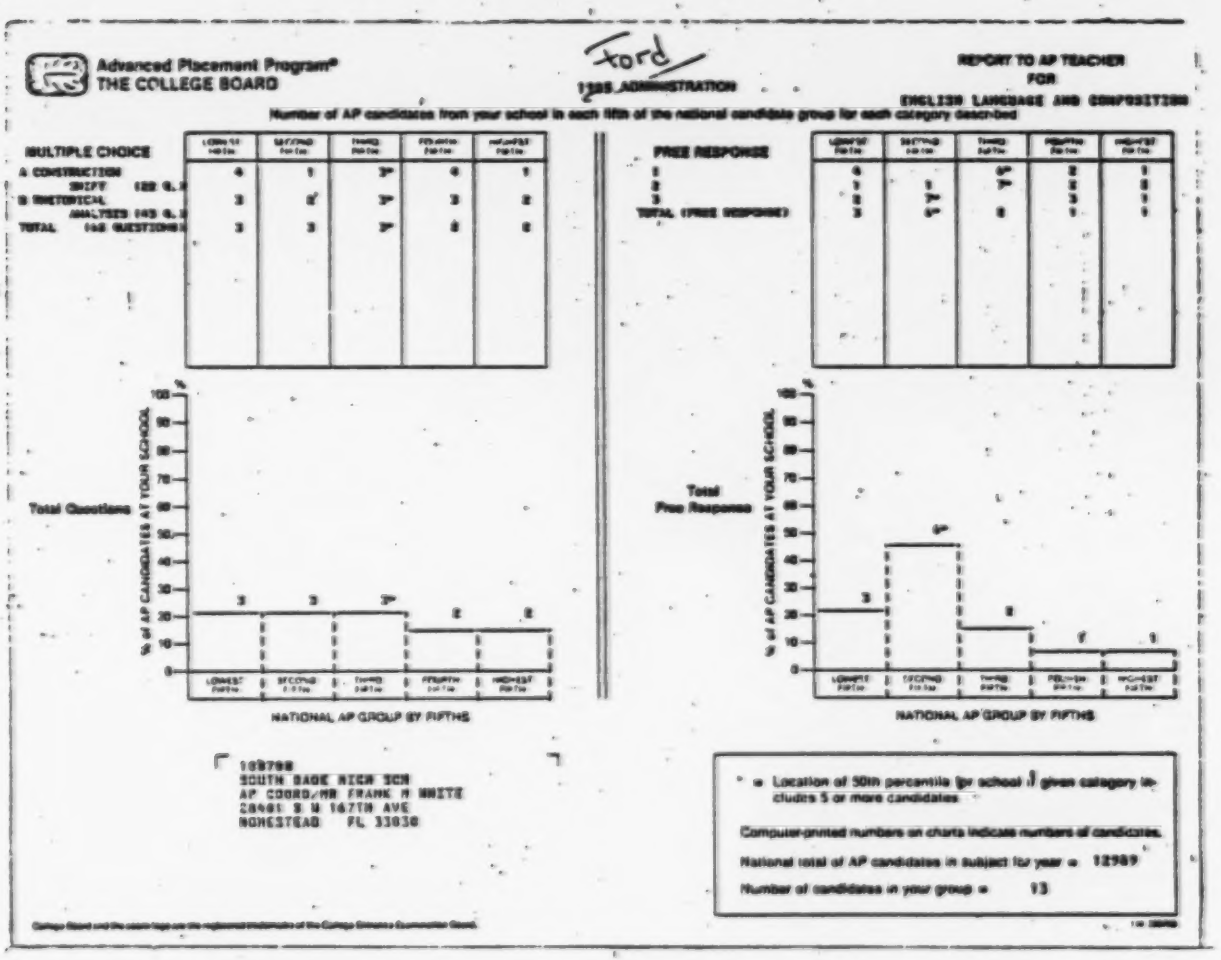
APPENDICES



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REPORT TO AP TEACHER
FOR
ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND COMPOSITION

Number of AP candidates from your school in each fifth of the national candidate group for each category described

MULTIPLE CHOICE

	LOWEST FIFTH	SECOND FIFTH	THIRD FIFTH	FOURTH FIFTH	HIGHEST FIFTH
A CONSTRUCTION SHIFT 122 Q.'s	4	1	3*	4	1
B RHETORICAL ANALYSIS 143 Q.'s	3	4	3*	3	2
TOTAL 168 QUESTIONS	3	3	3*	2	2

FREE RESPONSE

	LOWEST FIFTH	SECOND FIFTH	THIRD FIFTH	FOURTH FIFTH	HIGHEST FIFTH
1	4	1	5*	2	1
2	3	5	3	3	1
3	4	4	4	2	1
TOTAL (FREE RESPONSE)	11	17	8	3	1

Total Questions

% of AP CANDIDATES AT YOUR SCHOOL

NATIONAL AP GROUP BY FIFTHS

Total Free Response

% of AP CANDIDATES AT YOUR SCHOOL

NATIONAL AP GROUP BY FIFTHS

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* = Location of 50th percentile for school if given category includes 5 or more candidates

Computer-printed numbers on charts indicate numbers of candidates.

National total of AP candidates in subject for year = 12989

Number of candidates in your group = 13

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1985 APELC Report

Essay Scores
37

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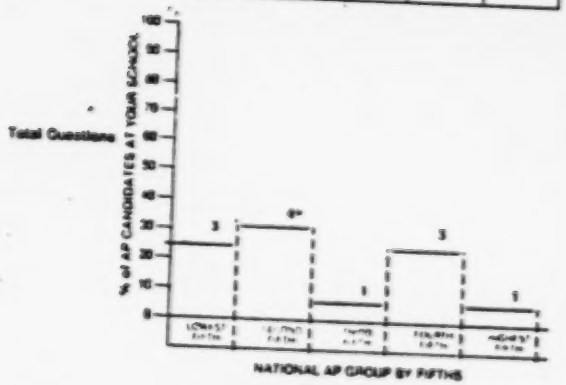
1986 ADMINISTRATION

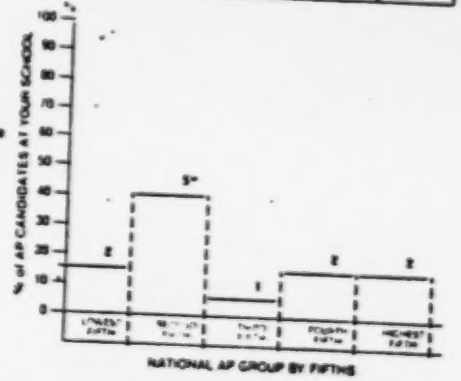
REPORT TO AP TEACHER
FOR
ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND COMPOSITION

Number of AP candidates from your school in each fifth of the national candidate group for each category described

MULTIPLE CHOICE	LOWEST Fifth	SECOND Fifth	THIRD Fifth	FOURTH Fifth	HIGHEST Fifth
TOTAL (60 QUESTIONS)	3	6*	1	3	1

FREE RESPONSE	LOWEST Fifth	SECOND Fifth	THIRD Fifth	FOURTH Fifth	HIGHEST Fifth
1	2	5*	1	2	2
2	1	4*	1	2	2
3	2	5*	1	2	2
TOTAL (FREE RESPONSE)	2	5*	1	2	2





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* = Location of 50th percentile for school if given category includes 5 or more candidates

Computer-printed numbers on charts indicate numbers of candidates.

National total of AP candidates in subject for year = 15488

Number of candidates in your group = 12

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1985 APELC Examination

Question 3

(Suggested time--35 minutes. This question counts one-third of the total essay section score.)

The study described n the passage below draws certain conclusions about the present state of television in the United States and implies that television should reflect the real world. Consider whether you agree with these conclusions and this implication. Then write an essay in which you take and defend a position on one or more of the issues raised in the passage.

Americans watch an average of over four hours of television daily, one-third of it during prime time. They see a world of adventure, melodrama, and fantasy. Gerbner and Signorielli, of the University of Pennsylvania's School of Communications, add that even the population of these shows is a poor reflection of reality.

In an analysis of some 14,000 characters appearing in 878 prime-time entertainment shows from 1969 to 1981, they found that men, who make up 49 percent of the United States population, were 73 percent of the prime-time population. Nearly half the White men were between 35 and 50 years old--the "age of authority" on TV, the authors say--while non-White men tended to be younger. Blacks were underrepresented by 27 percent compared to the real world, Hispanics by 63 percent.

Only 27 percent of the prime-time population was female. On children's programs, women were outnumbered four to one by men. Television women tended to be disproportionately young--one-third were in their twenties--and their marital status was left unclear in only 12 percent of the cases. Women also tended to age faster on television. More than 90 percent of the women over age 65 were portrayed as "elderly," the authors say, compared to 77 percent of the over-65 males. While a majority of the real world's working women are married, on television they were not, and they were employed in traditional female jobs--nurses

Appendix C (cont.)

secretaries, teachers.

Indeed, the overall occupational makeup of the television world was skewed. Two-thirds of the United States labor force is in blue-collar or service work, but professional, celebrity, and police characters dominated the prime-time airwaves. The heavy police population should come as no surprise: "Prime-time crime is at least ten times as rampant as in the real world," the authors report.

Television not only exaggerates real-world dangers, they say, but heightens feeling of "mistrust, vulnerability, and insecurity." White, middle-aged men have even more power on TV that they do in the real world, undermining minority viewers' sense of opportunity.

Why worry? Gerbner and Signorielli believe that today, television programs, not parents, tell children how the world works.

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1986 APELC Examination

Question 3

(Suggested time--35 minutes. This question counts as one-third of the total essay section score.)

"It is human nature to want patterns, standards, and a structure of behavior. A pattern to conform to is a kind of shelter."

In a well-written essay, evaluate the truth of the assertion above. Use evidence or examples from your reading to make your argument convincing.

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